

Draft Fontmell Magna Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th June 2020 at 7.00pm, via the Zoom videoconferencing platform

Present: Cllrs. M Humphreys (Chair), A Newbury, J Long and A Main

In attendance: Jane Somper – Dorset Councillor, M Wheatley – Clerk and 7 members of the public and 1 member of the press.

The Chair started the meeting by making some introductory remarks. He confirmed that this was the first virtual meeting of the Parish Council. He confirmed that the meeting would be recorded but that the recording would not be sent to anyone without the prior consent of the parties attending. He went on to confirm that a reporter from This is Alfred was also present. The reporter from This is Alfred confirmed that he was based in Shaftesbury and was producing podcasts for Shaftesbury and the surrounding villages. They had just obtained a radio licence and would be producing a local radio show in the near future. The reporter confirmed he would also be recording the meeting. At the end of the meeting he confirmed he would only be using highlights from the recording in any podcast. The Chair went on to confirm that the members of the public should mute their microphones and should raise their hands or use their reaction buttons to indicate they wished to speak. He confirmed he would share documents as and when and that the Councillors should vote by a show of hands or using their reaction buttons. There would be public questions at the start of the meeting and if during the course of the meeting there were any confidential matters to be discussed he would invite the members of the public to go into the waiting room. If there was a power failure or the broadband went down he would try and restart the meeting but if this was not possible the meeting would have to be adjourned. Most of the papers that would be referred to in the meeting had been circulated prior but in any event they were on the website. The Chair then started to record the meeting and asked if there were any public questions.

Public Questions:

One of the residents stated that he had recently exchanged emails with Cllr. Long in relation to the number of HGVs using the A350 south bound. The signage at the roundabout in Shaftesbury was being devoted to coronavirus messages. The HGVs therefore did not see the alternative route via the C13 and were coming down the A350. The resident wanted the signs to go back to showing the alternative route thereby encouraging the HGVs to use that route. Cllr. Long confirmed that when he drove down the A350 recently he had noted that at the roundabout in Shaftesbury there were signs up saying the A30 was closed and to use the A350. He had talked to Highways and there did not seem to have been an increase in the number of vehicles using the A350. In lockdown the traffic on the road was significantly less. It would seem however that use of the C13 would not become fully operational again until the lockdown had been lifted.

Cllr. Somper confirmed the traffic using the A350 had definitely increased in the last 10 days particularly the number of HGVs using the A350. She confirmed that she was going to have a meeting with Highways and the portfolio holder. The weight operated signs re-directing HGVs to use the C13 did not seem to work with the government Covid 19 messages. She was going to highlight this to Highways and try and get the one direction signs re-instated as soon as possible. One of the residents confirmed that in one of the last conversations he had had with Highways they had said they were going to change the recording system for the quantity of traffic so that the recording system was permanent. It would be interesting to have snapshots of the relevant dates to see if the increase in traffic was a matter of perception or of fact.

A resident stated that he had received a copy of the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group's ("NPMG") report on the proposed development on the land at Home Farm South St.. He confirmed that the developer had not contacted the owners of the footpath through to West St. which would be used to carry sewage. The developer was also intending to put a non-permeable surface on this footpath. The resident went on to comment that part of the value of the development was supposed to be the parking spaces for the school. He thought that there were insufficient spaces to accommodate all of the cars on West St. and he thought the road and turning space was too narrow for the school coach. He also queried whether parents coming in from the west would in any event go all the way round to this parking space.

The Chair confirmed he was going to write to the developer and would confirm who the owners of the footpath were. The Neighbourhood plan had suggested that 20 car parking spaces were needed; the current plan

showed 19 spaces. He did not know whether the school coach could use the road and turning space and he would refer back to the developer on this.

Action: MH to contact the developer re: ownership of the footpath and the school coach

There were no further questions.

08/06/01 Apologies for Absence. There were no apologies for absence.

08/06/02 Election of Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2020/21 – Cllr. Humphreys was nominated by Cllr. Newbury and that nomination was seconded by Cllr. Long. Cllr. Humphreys having confirmed he was willing to act as the Chairman for 2020/21 and there being no other nominations Cllr. Humphreys was duly elected as the Chairman of the Parish Council for 2020/21.

08/06/03 Election of Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2020/21 – Cllr. Newbury nominated Cllr. Long and this nomination was seconded by Cllr. Humphreys. There being no other nominations Cllr. Long was duly elected as Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2020/21.

08/06/04 Declarations of Acceptance of Office – The Clerk confirmed she would circulate these.

08/06/05 Appointment of Parish Officers – Marianne Wheatley would continue as the Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

08/06/06 To confirm Councillor responsibilities for 2020/21 – this item was dealt with after the co-option of Cllr. Main (see below). The Chairman confirmed that the areas of responsibility had been reviewed in April. Cllr. Main had indicated that he would be willing to take over Trees and Footpaths which were currently the responsibility of Cllr. Long and would be happy to assist Cllr. Newbury with Environmental Protection issues. The responsibilities would therefore be in accordance with the Annual Report prepared by the Chair as follows:

- **Planning** – planning applications, neighbourhood plan, Planning Working Group, planning regulations. **Cllr. Humphreys**
- **Highways** – road maintenance, signage and potholes, traffic management, speed watch, strategic planning, A350CG. **Cllr. Long**
- **Environmental Protection** – flood protection, grit/salt bins, verges, litter and fly tipping, grass cutting, grounds and hedgerow maintenance, dog fouling. **Cllr. Newbury/Cllr. Main**
- **District liaison** - police, health & medical services (e.g. Patient Partnership Group, Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, Shaftesbury Hospital), DAPTC, Dorset Unitary Council, neighbouring parish councils, Compton Abbas airfield. **Cllr. Humphreys**
- **Parish Communications** – Parish website (including posting The Gossip Tree), email group, social media, village shop liaison, parish noticeboards, Annual Parish Report. **Cllr. Humphreys**
- **Social Infrastructure** – maintenance of parish council assets, Best Kept Village, Home Watch, defibrillators, village shop, broadband and mobile coverage, recreation, allotments, Village Hall. **Cllr. Newbury**
- **Footpaths** – footpaths, rights of way, signposts. **Cllr. Main**
- **Trees** – Applications for tree works, encouraging tree planting, TPOs. **Cllr. Main**
- **Governance** – procedures, new councillor recruitment and induction, councillor training, Annual Parish Report, risk management, contingency planning. **Cllr. Humphreys**

Cllr. Main confirmed that he had commitments in Norway and might not always be able to attend meetings.

08/06/07 Declarations of Interest. There were no declarations of interest.

08/06/08 Co-options. (n.b. This item was dealt with before item 08/06/06) The Chair confirmed he was pleased to announce that Andy Main had offered to join the Parish council. Andy Main having confirmed his willingness to act was unanimously co-opted to the Parish Council. The Chair reiterated that it was very difficult to run the Council with so few members and again encouraged residents to consider joining the Parish Council.

08/06/09 Minutes of the Meeting on 9th March 2020. The draft minutes were unanimously approved and signed by the Chair.

08/06/010 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting on 8th March 2020. The Chair confirmed that the development of the website had been somewhat disrupted by the lockdown. He had submitted a 3rd round of comments and Vision ICT had confirmed that they had updated the new website to take in the new content on the old website. The website had not as yet gone live. The Clerk confirmed that to go live the Parish Council would just need to confirm this with Vision ICT. It was agreed that the Chair would have one more look through the website and assuming it was in order the Clerk would confirm with Vision ICT that the website could go live.

Action: MH to review website and confirm it is ready to go live.

The Clerk confirmed that the electricians had now inspected the telephone box and some works were required including changing the light and installing a fuse switch spur. It was agreed that the Clerk would obtain a quote for this work and then depending on the quote approach BT to see if they would undertake the work before the Parish Council acquired the phone box.

Action: Clerk to obtain quote and if appropriate contact BT.

Cllr. Newbury confirmed the Parish Council were supporting the Local Electricity Bill which was intended to allow local communities to generate their own electricity. The Parish Council had confirmed their support to Power for the People – who were promoting the bill - and Simon Hoare the MP. Cllr. Somper confirmed she was not familiar with this bill but had had some discussion with another Parish Council previously regarding the production of electricity but she was not sure this was the same thing. Cllr. Newbury copied Cllr. Somper in on the relevant email.

The Chair then referred to the recent correspondence regarding the flooding at Piper's Mill. Cllr. Long reported that he had spoken to one of the residents who had confirmed that he was not affected by the flooding. The quickest thing to do would be for the resident who was mainly affected by this problem to put in a drain across her land. There were 4 drains which drained into the stream and because they took all of the run off from the surrounding hills they regularly became blocked. What was needed was for the road to be dug up and for bigger drains to be installed but this was a matter of funds. The resident most affected by this problem had put in a formal complaint to Dorset Council and this was therefore no longer within the Parish Council's remit.

08/06/011 To receive a report from the Dorset Councillor. The Dorset Councillor had circulated a report which will be posted on the website. The Dorset Councillor ran through the headlines in that report. The Dorset Councillor went on to confirm she had sent through relevant reports throughout the lockdown period and congratulated the villages for their community spirit during the current difficult circumstances. The easing of the lockdown was complicated and Dorset Council were following the guidelines handed down by Central Government as and when they came through. The Chair confirmed that the amount of material being sent through was good and the Parish Council was well informed. He and the Clerk had been reviewing the information and were disseminating the same as appropriate. He thanked Cllr. Somper for her continued help and support.

08/06/012 Reports from the Parish Councillors

a. Planning – Cllr. Humphreys confirmed that there were 4 applications which had been received recently. The applications had been reviewed by the NPMG and their reports were available on the website. In brief the applications were as follows:

6 Marshlands, Penn Hill – Erect Balcony and access steps. The Parish Council had supported this application.

Old Pump Cottage, West St., - Change of use of garage into self-contained annexe ancillary to the main building. The Parish Council are going to support this application.

Gupples Farm, Gupples Lane – This was an application to convert 3 farm buildings to create 3 dwellings. This was on top of the planning application to build 3 dwellings which had already

been approved. This would mean 6 dwellings in a rural location. The Parish Council has therefore objected to this application.

Development Land at Home Farm South Street – The outline application for this development had been submitted to Dorset Council in March 2018. This application had still not been approved but the developer had now submitted the full application. The Parish Council were preparing their comments. The development broadly complies with the Neighbourhood Plan but there are a number of points of detail that the Parish Council think are contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council will finalise its comments this week and will then post their comments on the Dorset Council website.

Action: Clerk to submit response re: Old Pump Cottage and comments on the development of Land at Home Farm South Street to be finalised and submitted to Dorset Council.

b. Trees – Cllr. Long confirmed that whilst Dorset Council were dealing with such applications without consulting the Parish Council the applications which had come through recently had all been reasonable. No comments regarding any of the proposed works had been received.

c. Highways – Cllr. Long confirmed that he had spoken to the Highways Community Officer who was not in the office at present but was still dealing with Highway matters. He had noted that after the sign saying to use the C13 in Shaftesbury there was not sign on the roundabout directing you to the C13. At present as above there were signs saying the A30 was closed and to use the A350. He was not aware of a huge increase in the number of HGVs using the A350 but he had noted the increase in the number of motorbikes using the road. Cllr. Somper confirmed that Highways were doing a lot of work at the moment making use of the fact that the roads were quieter at the moment. They were undertaking some big projects including one at Iwerne Minster. Cllr. Long confirmed that Highways were catching up with the outstanding work. One of the residents confirmed he had written to the Police about the number of motorbikes and they had confirmed that they had this under control.

Cllr. Long confirmed he had spoken to the agent of the owners of the car park at the top of Mill St. It had been confirmed that the gap between the barriers was the average width of a car. People were nervous about driving between the blocks but unfortunately nothing would now be done about this. The blocks had been installed to prevent fly tipping and the landowner was not going to move them. Cllr. Newbury agreed that there was nothing the Parish Council could do but there was nothing to stop people writing to the landowner.

d. Environmental Protection – Cllr. Newbury confirmed that the tree at Bedchester had been trimmed but this was not sufficient accordingly a quote had been obtained to trim this tree back further. The quote was approved and the Clerk confirmed she would instruct the arborist accordingly.

Action: Clerk to instruct Arborist.

Cllr. Newbury confirmed that the litter pick which had been organised had been cancelled but she had noted that various residents had been going out on their own and the roads did not look too bad. She had been encouraging residents to adopt the “cut less cut later” policy and had put up various notices to this effect. Some of the verges looked really nice now with various wildflowers growing through although some verges were still being cut.

The defibrillator had had new pads installed. The Parish Council thanked Cllr. Newbury’s husband for doing this. Cllr. Newbury confirmed as above that the Parish Council were supporting the Local Electricity Bill. She had been gradually clearing the moss on the pavement in Orchard close. There was however some vegetation that needed to be cut back. She would ask the resident in question to do this.

e. Social Infrastructure – Cllr. Newbury confirmed that the Village Hall, the playing fields and the tennis courts had all been closed. The tennis courts had however recently been re-opened. The Village Hall were looking to bring broadband into the hall but this might depend on the take up of Wessex Broadband in the rest of the village. The Village Shop were going to put up new signs by the Gossip Tree and on the A350 but these would be the same size as the existing signs.

f. District Liaison – The Chair confirmed that the Parish Council continued to receive various reports from Dorset Council. The Parish Council had offered its views to the Community Land Trust. It was confirmed that the Community Land Trust had recently sent out an update and had done a lot of due diligence work part of which was a structural survey. Barry Roberts was thanked for undertaking the structural survey.

g. Footpaths – One of the residents had asked about the re-direction of the footpaths as part of a new development on Land at Home Farm: the Chair confirmed he had written to the developer in this regard. Cllr. Long confirmed that he had reviewed the plans and the footpath from Sutton Waldron had been re-routed round the south of the development across the car park and joins up with the footpath on the A350. The other footpath seems to push north of the development and again joins up with the car park. Cllr. Long also commented that the Clerk had heard from one of the Sutton Waldron Councillors that the gates on the Lynchets were being left open and the cattle had escaped. The Clerk confirmed that if anyone was walking on the Lynchets please could they check the gates were shut.

Action: MH to follow up the re-direction of the footpaths with the developers.

h. Governance – The Chair had produced an Annual Report which had been posted on the website. The Chair reiterated that because of the lack of Parish Councillors the Parish Council had not pursued a number of projects. He asked everyone to canvass the people they knew to see if anyone was willing to become a member of the Parish Council.

08/06/013 To consider report from the RFO, to agree pay rise and to approve End of Year Accounts and Audit Statements - The End of Year Accounts and the Accounts to 31st May 2020 had been circulated. The Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2020 had been summarised by the Chair in his report. Essentially the Parish Council were £1275 over budget which was mainly as a result of a one off grant to the Village Hall for the play area. The Internal Auditor had audited the End of Year accounts and there was nothing material to report. The Clerk read out the statements in S1 of the Audit Statement item by item and the Parish Council confirmed that they had taken the appropriate steps. The Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2020 and S1 & 2 of the Audit Statement were unanimously approved and it was confirmed that the Chairman and the Clerk should sign the forms and the Certificate of Exemption and that this should be sent to the External Auditors. The Clerk confirmed that in the budget for 2020/21 a 2% pay rise had been budgeted for. She asked the Parish Council to approve this pay rise of £6.85 a month i.e. £349.57 per month to take effect from 1st April 2020. This pay rise was unanimously agreed.

08/06/014 To resolve to pay Bills presented. The invoices and standing orders paid since the last meeting were set out in the Schedule. It was agreed that the bills as set out in the schedule should be paid:

- M Wheatley – Zoom and back pay - £42.80
- SLCC – renewal of membership – 60.54
- Vale Garden Services - £50.00
- DE Scott Electricals - £80.72

Cllr. Humphreys confirmed that the budget would be quite tight this year and the Parish Council would need to keep an eye on it.

08/06/015 Other Matters arising from recent correspondence – the Chair confirmed that he had been contacted by one of the residents of The Mead to enquire about whether, as part of the Development at Home Farm South Street, The Mead could be connected to the foul water drains. The Chair would contact the developer in this regard. It was not clear how this was to be funded but if it was as part of the S.106 agreement this was not a matter for the Parish Council. All the Parish Council could do was put the parties in touch. The Clerk reminded the Parish Council that they were going to have the hedge by the War Memorial pruned and that she would obtain a quote for this from the firm who had pruned the tree at Bedchester.

Action: Clerk to obtain quote to prune the War Memorial hedge.

08/06/016 Date of Next Meeting – (Item 08/06/017 was dealt with prior to this item) The next meeting is currently due to take place on 28th September 2020. It maybe that by then the Parish Council can hold a physical meeting but this would be decided nearer the time.

08/06/017 A.O.B. – The Chair commented that this was the first meeting since the lockdown and during that time both Leo and Priscilla Williams had very sadly passed away. He wanted to offer his and the rest of the Parish Council’s sincere condolences to the family and wanted to express the Parish Council’s thanks to Leo and his wife for their services to the Parish Council, the parish generally and to the district. The Chair thanked the members of the public, the councillors including the Dorset Councillor, and the Clerk for attending the meeting.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.37pm.

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Chair, Fontmell Magna Parish Council